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INTIMACY IN COCKTAIL LOUNGES

by

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ABSTRACT

Observational data were collected in a field study on public intimacy by heterosexual couples in cocktail lounges. It was hypothesized that couples would be more intimate in their public interaction; i.e., they would engage in acts of touching, talking, and display close interpersonal distance due to the influence of alcohol consumption, physical attractiveness, age, and marital status. It was found that, contrary to popular belief, the more alcohol a woman consumes, the less touching occurred. Physically attractive males were associated with dyads with low rates of conversation. Also, differences in physical attractiveness tended to increase interpersonal distance. Finally, it was also found that married couples tended to sit farther apart than unmarried couples. Implications of this research and suggestions for future research were discussed.

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INTROLUCTION

Cocktail Lounges and Alcohol Consumption.

A large body of research on cocktail lounges has emphasized the role of the environment in facilitating social interaction (Moore, 1897; Gottlieb, 1957; Clinard, 1962; Sommer, 1965; Cavan, 1966; Spradley and Mann, 1975; Cloyd, 1977; Byrne, 1978; Glenwick et al., 1978). This research has found that drinking establishments function as a social center that meets and supplies a variety of needs for patrons. In particular, the very nature of the cocktail lounge's physical setting, with its dim lights and sale of alcohol, encourages and promotes sexual encounters.

Smith et al. (1975) found in an experimental study on the effects of alcohol on emotional behavior of heterosexual couples that subjects who were administered a 1.5 ml./kg. dose of alcohol exhibited a quantitatively and qualitatively higher increase in total emotional expression than those receiving a lower dosage of 1.0 ml./kg. and placebo. Alcohol consumption produced significant increases in elation, giddiness, and happiness. The present research extends the Smith et al. study to a field setting by considering the influence of alcohol consumption on behavior, in particular, intimacy in cocktail lounges. We expected that couples

would be more intimate in their public interaction due to the influence of alcohol consumption.

Moore (1897:9), an early sociologist, studied the "social value of the saloon" and reports that,

> No one who is familiar with this life will deny the great educational value of the saloons, and this social expression, this freeing of human activity, is rendered possible by the stimulant which the saloon offers.

Cavan (1966:235) conducted an ethnography of bar behavior and found that cocktail lounges facilitate a type of "time-out" period where the "...constraint and respect the social world ordinarily requires is no longer demanded and, hence, they (cocktail lounges) permit even for the ordinarily prudent what would otherwise be considered social licentiousness."

In the present studies we expected to find that couples who consumed more alcohol would show more public intimacy. This may be attributed to the influence of the alcohol consumption as well as the environment presented in the cocktail lounge setting. That is, in our culture the cocktail lounge appears as an appropriate and acceptable location to display public intimacy. The environmental and social factors such as dim lighting and the general social atmosphere which is attributed to cocktail lounges facilitates public intimacy. Cloyd (1977) found that both the physical setting of the cocktail lounge as well as the "...more open and

relaxed feeling produced by the ingestion of alcohol facilitate a (barroom) member's ability to generate an encounter (intimately)" (page 34).

Physical Attractiveness

A number of studies have found that married (Strobe et al., 1971; Murstein and Christy, 1976) and dating couples (Silverman, 1972; Murstein, 1972) are similar in their physical attractiveness. This research supports Walster et al's. (1966) "matching hypothesis" which predicts that an individual will choose a partner of approximately the same level of physical attractiveness. This physical attractiveness matching principle was further supported by Berscheid et al's (1971) experiments. They found that when an individual was required to actively choose a partner, generally, they tended to choose a partner that matched their level of attractiveness. That is, men and women who were of lesser physical attractiveness tended to choose less attractive partners than those chosen by highly attractive individuals (cf. Berscheid and Walster, 1974).

The validity of the assertion that beauty is in the eye of the beholder is not disputed. However, a number of studies have used the consensus method to determine interrater reliability of physical attractive-

ness measures (Berscheid et al., 1971; Murstein, 1972; Murstein and Christy, 1976; Glenwick et al., 1978; Harrell, 1979). This research indicates that there is often a great deal of agreement between judges concerning the physical attractiveness of a subject. It appears that however ambiguous the definition and criteria of attractiveness, judges, both male and female, normally show a high amount of overall agreement in what they find attractive in a subject's appearance. Berscheid and Walster (1974:182) point out that interrater reliabilities obtained in naturalistic settings or situations "...in which individuals are rated in the flesh rather that depicted in photographs, are lower than those obtained in laboratory settings using photographic stimuli." However, these naturalistic reliabilities are usually respectably high considering the complexity of the stimuli and the time restrictions in judging (e.g., Walster et al., 1966).

A number of studies have revealed that physical attractiveness serves as an important determinant of interpersonal attraction (Walster et al., 1966; Brislin and Lewis, 1968; Berscheid et al., 1971; Mathes, 1975; Glenwick et al., 1978; Harrell, 1979). This literature finds that attractive people are generally better liked, more popular, and they receive a greater variety of favorably attributed characteristics as well as preferen-

tial treatment than unattractive people. Aronson (1976: 229) states that:

> We are more affected by physically attractive people than by physically unattractive people, and, unless we are specifically abused by them, we tend to like them better. Moreover, in situations involving trouble and turmoil, beautiful people tend to be given the benefit of the doubt -they receive more favorable treatment than homely people.

In this thesis, we were interested in whether physically attractive people behaved differently than unattractive people. We expected that couples who were similar in attractiveness might like each other more, and, subsequently, display more public intimacy than couples with disparities in their physical attractiveness. To examine this, the absolute difference in attractiveness between the members of a couple was taken. This difference ignores the sign of the numbers being subtracted. The theoretical purpose in using this measure was to examine the couple, not each individual, and determine whether the couple's similarity or disparity in attractiveness affects their social interaction and public displays of intimacy.

Also, we expected to find individual differences in social behavior due to an individual's attractiveness alone, without considering his partner's attractiveness. Thus, the impact of each person's level of attractiveness on the quantity and quality of intimacy was examined.

Additionally, we expected to find differences in public displays of intimacy when one person's attractiveness exceeded the attractiveness of the other member of the couple. To examine this, the arithmetic difference in attractiveness was taken. The theoretical purpose for using this measure was to examine the individual in the context of the couple.

Age and Marital Status.

In our culture, generally, people tend to behave differently once they marry and as they grow older. This is due to societal constraints that dictate appropriate behaviors for various marital and age cohorts. For example, criminal law regards and treats juveniles in a different light than adults. That is, adults are held more accountable for their behavior. The law assumes and affords adolescents less accountable for deviance. This is due to an assumption that juveniles are engaged in the socialization process and, therefore, not yet mature enough to be fully responsible for their behavior. Normally, in our culture, as a person grows older and marries, society requires them to behave in a more responsible manner than younger unmarried people. A person's age and marital status are important variables affecting public behavior. We expect public behavior to vary as a function of a person's age and marital status.

Morris (1977:88) presents an anecdotal account of differences in public behavior as a function of age and marital status. He explains that:

> If we look at three couples sitting in the park, the pair who are strangers and the pair who are an old married couple outwardly have much in common. They sit silently ignoring each other for much of the time. The third couple are obviously young lovers or new friends, because they never pause in their mutual attentiveness. If they are potential lovers who have not yet made love together, they will not only be attentive to each other, but will probably also keep up a more or less non-stop conversation. If they have actually made love, then the tie will already be tighter and they will now be likely to enjoy periods of silence. But if they do, their mutual attentiveness will not wane with their words, as it does with the old married couple. They will show it by means of a variety of body actions, especially intimate body contact.

Rosenblatt (1974) conducted an observational study of couples' behavior in public places. He found that older adults or adults with a relationship of longer duration were less intimate than younger couples. The older couples touched, talked, and smiled less than the younger couples.

Harrell (1979) conducted an observational study to examine public displays of intimacy in married couples. He found that younger couples displayed more public intimacy than older couples. That is, the younger couples were observed to engage in greater incidents of mutual talking, touching, and smiling than older couples. Also, couples who were similar in

age interacted more than couples who were different in age.

In this thesis, we predicted that younger couples would show greater displays of public intimacy. We also expected that couples who were similar in age would exhibit greater incidents of touching, talking, and close interpersonal distances. The reason for this is that couples who are similar in age are often attracted to each other more than couples who differ in their age (Willis, 1966).

We expected that married couples would behave differently than unmarried couples. That is, we expected unmarried couples to engage in greater acts of public intimacy.

Dependent Variables.

The dependent variables we examined were touching, talking, and interpersonal distance.

Touching. One measure of intimacy which we examined was touching behavior. Jourard (1966; 1968) reports observing an average of two touches per hour of observation by couples in coffee shops. Also, based on her research and Jourard's studies, Henley (1973) reports a "touching-in-public" constant of about two touches per hour of observation.

Touching is an important way of communicating with others (Montagu, 1971). In a study on the mean-

ings of touching, Nguyen et al. (1975) found that their respondents indicated that touching most often conveys affection.

In a field experiment, Fisher et al. (1976:417) tested whether "...a momentary touch between two interacting strangers would be experienced as a mildly pleasant stimulus, and that it would arouse positive affect." They set up a situation in which library users were either touched or not touched by the attendant while checking out books. The subjects were then asked if they would participate in an evaluation of the library and the checkout attendant. They found that subjects who were touched reported a more positive affective state about their own feelings and evaluated the library and attendant more positively. In the touch condition, females were uniformly positive in their responses. Males, however, were more ambivalent in their responses to touching.

In this thesis we examined touching as a measure of intimacy. We expected that touching would vary as a function of alcohol consumption, physical attractiveness, age, and marital status.

Interpersonal Distance.

Another measure of intimacy that we examined in this thesis was the interpersonal distances of couples

seated in cocktail lounges. Interpersonal distance has also been employed in studies of attraction (e.g., Harrell, 1979). This research indicates that members of couples who are attracted to one another will stand closer and sit closer in public places.

Baxter (1970) observed couples in natural settings located in various public areas of a municipal zoo. He found that the interpersonal distances between members of a couple increased with their age, and that younger couples interacted at closer distances. These empirical results presented by Baxter lend support to our discussion above concerning Morris's (1977) description of three couples sitting in a park.

Hall (1966) asserts that low levels of illumination will ordinarily bring people closer together. From this it might follow that cocktail lounges would tend to encourage close interpersonal distances between members of a couple. This is due to the generally dim lit atmosphere usually prevalent in cocktail lounges.

In this thesis we predicted that interpersonal distances between couples would vary as a function of alcohol consumption, physical attractiveness, age, and marital status.

Talking.

We examined the amounts of talking by couples in a cocktail lounge as a measure of intimacy.

We quoted, a few pages earlier, Morris's (1977: 88) comparison of three couples sitting in a park. He states that "...potential lovers...will not only be attentive to each other, but will probably keep up a more or less non-stop conversation."

We expected that talking would vary as a function of alcohol consumption, physical attractiveness, age, and marital status.

Summary of Major Hypotheses.

(1) In this thesis, we predict that couples will be more intimate in their public interaction; i.e., they will engage in acts of touching, talking, and display close interpersonal distance due to alcohol consumption.

(2) We expect that measures of touching, talking, and interpersonal distance will be effected by the physical attractiveness of the members of the couple. We predict that couples similar in their physical attractiveness will show greater intimacy than couples who differ in attractiveness. Also, we hypothesize that very attractive males and females will exhibit

greater displays of intimacy than unattractive people.

(3) It is hypothesized that younger couples will be more intimate than older couples. We also expect that couples who are similar in age will be more intimate than couples who differ in age. We predict that older couples will be less intimate than younger couples because younger couples would be more uninhibited in their displays of public intimacy. We expect that as a couple's age disparity increases there will be less intimacy because the greater the age disparity the more conspicuous their intimacy will appear, and subsequently, such a couple will feel less inclined towards public intimacy. A young couple, of similar ages, would not expect to be the subject of quizzical stares as a result of their displays of public intimacy. On the other hand, an older male accompanied by a much younger female, or an older female accompanied by a much younger male, could expect to be the subject of quizzical stares due to public intimacy.

(4) We predict that married couples will show less public intimacy than unmarried couples.

(5) We expect that measures of touching will be effected by the interpersonal distance and talking by the members of the couple. We predict that couples who sit close and talk will show greater intimacy than couples who maintain greater interpersonal distance with little, if any, talk. Of course, there has to be some degree of physical proximity before any touching can take place. That is, we expect that couples with a large distance between them will not touch.

(6) We expect that measures of talking will be effected by the interpersonal distance and touching by the members of the couple. We predict that barriers that increase interpersonal distance and decrease touching will also reduce the amounts of talking by the members of a couple. Moreover, a couple that has a large distance between them will not only find it difficult to touch one another but also the opportunity to converse becomes more difficult as the distance increases.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS

Method. Since cocktail lounges are numerous and scattered throughout every town, city, and suburb, they serve as an excellent laboratory for the study of human behavior (Spradley and Mann, 1975). A number of previous field studies have found cocktail lounges appropriate for the study of sex role behavior (Cavan, 1966; Roebuck and Spray, 1967; Mann, 1976; Cloyd, 1977; Byrne, 1978; Glenwick et al., 1978) and as a feasible setting in which to assess alcohol consumption (Sommer, 1965; Kessler and Gomberg, 1974; Cutler and Storm, 1975; Plant et al., 1977). A field study, although lacking the control offered in a laboratory, captures a more naturalistic sample of the subjects' behavior.

In this study, we frequented a variety of cocktail lounges. Observations were carried out only in cocktail lounges. That is, public houses, taverns, and restaurants which did not have a specific area set aside as a cocktail lounge were excluded from observations. Formally, the distinction between the cocktail lounge and tavern is that the latter is licensed for the sale of beer and not mixed cocktails. On the other hand, the cocktail lounge is licensed to sell both beer and mixed drinks. The range of cocktail

lounges that we visited ran from large to small and, of course, the physical and social structures of the various lounges also varied from one another. That is, some lounges had live musical entertainment, or recorded music, while some other lounges did not have any music at all; some lounges had dimmer lighting than others; some lounges attracted, partially due to location, various occupational groupings, i.e., office personnel in the city's business section, and students in the university area; and, accordingly, some lounges were more expensive than others.

In designing our research, we considered the potential effects of obvious variability from one lounge to another. We chose, however, not to measure or attempt analyzing a number of these effects relating to lounge variability. This was due to a number of reasons. Firstly, we intentionally conducted observations in a variety of lounges in order to avoid saturating any given lounge with observers. This was done because of the possibility that during the course of two weeks of field observations the lounge's regular customers, employees, and management might recognize the observers and, consequently, alter their behavior. As a result, this was minimized by visiting a variety of lounges. Secondly, the range of lounges visited and their respective features that we failed to meas-

ure and include in the study were, for our purposes, beyond the scope of this study. That is, we were interested in social interaction in cocktail lounge settings with the latter regarded in the macro-level and the former in the micro-level of analysis. Thirdly, we did not perçeive lounge variability and unmeasured characteristics as a deficit to the data. Moreover, observing in a variety of cocktail lounges may have strengthened the ability of the data to generalize about bar behavior than if we had only visited one or a few lounges. Finally, we were concerned with the social interaction of heterosexual couples, as a result, it seemed reasonable to conduct our observations in a variety of cocktail lounge settings in order to observe the behavior of a variety of couples rather than those couples attracted to particular lounges.

Subjects. One hundred and sixty-one heterosexual couples were observed in forty different cocktail lounges in the City of Edmonton, Alberta.

Observers. Eighty-two undergraduate students working as co-observers from an introductory course in social psychology conducted the observations.

Dependent Variables. The dependent variables that we

conceptualized and measured in this study were:

(1) How often couples touch one another and talk during a sixty second period of observation. Each couple was observed for sixty seconds every five minutes, over a period of thirty minutes where six observations were recorded. Whether or not each member of a couple spoke during that five minute segment was noted. If neither person spoke they were given a zero score. If either person spoke a "1" was awarded. If both spoke a "1" was also recorded. A total score was arrived at by adding all six observation periods. The same scoring procedure was applied to touching.

Previous studies (e.g., Sommer, 1965; Kessler and Gomberg, 1974; Cutler and Storm, 1975; Plant et al., 1977) have found that patrons in cocktail lounges seldom remain for lengthy periods of time. Rather, the majority of patrons usually leave the lounge after a variable but normally moderate period of time. As a result we arrived at the somewhat arbitrary minimum period of observation of thirty minutes. We felt that thirty minutes of observation would capture a suffi-

ciently representative sample of the subject's social interaction and alcohol consumption. These six five minute periods of observation were recorded during the first minute of the five minute period. This particular method of observation was chosen in order to facilitate a standardized systematic procedure for recording samples of the observed couple's behavior. The time sampling method was employed to insure that each couple was observed for the same period of time. The time interval of five minutes in between each observation was chosen in order to obtain a relatively frequent but not constant sample of the subjects' behavior. To be sure, we considered employing a continuous measure of the subject's interaction; however, we chose to use the time sampling method, concluding that this measure would best control and reduce the amount of data collected. There are, of course, a few problems and limitations which stem from this type of time sampling. First, we have no way of knowing the subject's behavior either prior to or after our observations. In the case of alcohol consumption, we do not know how much the subjects have consumed, either at home or at a previous lounge, prior to our observations. A

further problem endemic to this type of time sampling procedure is that subjects who touch, talk, or move closer together prior to the sixty second observation sample, but then move apart or disengage their touching and talking at the time of sampling, will not have their incidents of intimacy recorded, and, as a result, missing data occurs. Previous studies (e.g., Sommer, 1965; Cutler and Storm, 1974; Plant et. al., 1977) point out difficulties with this type of sampling where it is essential that the observers attempt to record their observations as unobtrusively as possible. In Sommer's (1965) study the observers concealed their observation sheets in newspapers. In this study the observers were encouraged to fold their observation schedules and keep them concealed or leave them lying on the table with other books and papers.

(2) Interpersonal distance was estimated during each sixty second period of observation. For purposes of analysis, the distance between the subjects' shoulders were averaged (the scores for each of the two observers were added together and then divided by two) and categorized in terms of a seven point scale. The seven levels of

response in this scale form a modified version of Hall's (1966) spatial zones. Thus, when a person leans forward to the other they were judged as being closer, when in fact they may not have even moved their chairs closer and would otherwise have been recorded at a farther distance apart. It seems reasonable to assume that using this distance between the couple's shoulders relates more to intimacy than other points of reference or body axis.

A problem inherent in this type of measurement was, of course, the difficult task of accurately estimating subjects' interpersonal distances while the observers were sitting at a distant table in a typically dark cocktail lounge. We compensated for this, to a certain extent, by checking the interrater reliability concerning the amount of agreement in recording interpersonal distances. Cases where the observers showed little agreement regarding the couple's interpersonal distances were discarded and excluded from the data set. As a result, what initially appeared as a limiting problem became a reliable strength to the measure. Indeed, by using only those cases where observers were high in agreement, the measure's

accuracy and reliability was controlled and maintained at a reasonable level.

The most intimate distance occurred when the seated couple's shoulders were less than one inch apart. The second most intimate distance occurred when the couple was two to six inches apart. The fourth distance ranged from thirteen to eighteen inches. The range of the fifth level was when the couple's shoulders were in between nineteen to twenty-four inches. The sixth level occurred at distances in between twenty-five to thirty-six inches. Finally, the last level occurred when the couple's shoulders were more than thirty-six inches apart.

In this study, all six estimates of interpersonal distance were added together over the thirty minutes of observation. This gave us a total score for interpersonal distance. The higher the total score on this variable, the greater the interpersonal distance.

Organismic and Independent Variables. Organismic variables are those variables which cannot be manipulated or controlled by an experimenter in measuring their effects upon a dependent variable. In short, an organismic variable is a distinctive physiological

characteristics of an organism i.e., sex, age, and physical attractiveness.

In this study, the organismic and independent variables were recorded at the beginning of the observation schedule were the sex, estimated age, physical attractiveness of the subjects, and their marital status.

Male and female physical attractiveness was measured separately by both observers on a four point scale, ranging from very unattractive to very attractive. These separate indices of physical attractiveness were examined for their singular effect on couple intimacy.

The other measures of attractiveness that we used were the absolute and arithmetic differences in physical attractiveness between the members of a couple. Both of these indices were analyzed and, for theoretical reasons, they differ from each other in important ways. We used these measures when we examined the couple's social interaction and where similarities and disparities in attractiveness were related to intimacy. We used these measures in addition to the separate male and female attractiveness measures, to facilitate the plural effect from considering the couple's similarities and disparities in attractiveness upon public intimacy.

Marital status was measured by observing whether

or not the woman was wearing a wedding ring. Although it is impossible to determine accurately subject's marital status using purely observational data collection procedures, or whether those categorized as married were in fact married to each other. It seems reasonable, however, to assume that this measure does accommodate a relative amount of face validity. The reason for this is that while there can be no guarantees that those subjects deemed as married were married, by restricting the marital status category to only those women wearing wedding rings, we increase the likelihood that they were married more so than sheer intuition. Also, in cases where the observers doubted or could not be certain of the couple's marital status they were, accordingly, categorized in that vein. There are, of course, validity problems with the identification of married couples when using purely observational measures. However, these measures, despite their insensitivity and possible inaccuracies, remain superior to no measures.

The number of drinks consumed by the male and female were recorded separately during the sixty second period of observation, once every five minutes. Again, this is another measure which presents validity problems with regard to the types of drinks that the subjects consumed. However, we were more concerned

with the rate and quantity of subject's alcohol consumption than the congener effects (cf. Teger et al., 1969; Taylor and Gammon, 1975) which result from consumption of different types of alcohol; i.e., beer, wine, and assorted cocktails. Moreover, additional measurement problems result when we consider the fact that alcohol consumption generally effects people differently due to physiological disparities such as body types and sizes (e.g., normally, endomorphs can consume more alcohol with less of an impairing effect than ectomorphs). Also, alcohol consumption generally affects people differently due to personality and psychological differences. Indeed, people who drink regularly, generally have a higher tolerance to the effects of various alcoholic beverages than those people who seldom imbibe. As a result of considering these factors we remain cognizant of the problems with validity; however, we agree with Plant et al. (1977) that direct observation serves as a reliable method of assessing alcohol consumption in cocktail lounges. Indeed, simply counting the number of drinks consumed by the subjects, for our purposes, exists as a crude measure of impairment, but suffices as an adequate guage of the relationship between alcohol consumption and social interaction observed in public.

Procedure. A heterosexual couple was randomly selected for observation provided they met the following criteria:

(1) The prospective couple must not already have been seated in the lounge. Couples who were already seated in the lounge were ineligible for observation. The observations began with an eligible couple after they had entered the lounge and were seated.

(2) If the couple was joined by another person or persons, the couple was disqualified and a new couple was selected.

(3) If a couple being observed left the lounge prior to the completion of at least thirty minutes, they were disqualified and a new couple was selected.

Each member of the pair of observers was responsible for measuring all of the previously mentioned variable. The observers recorded their observations independently of one another and without any collaboration, other than discussing which couple to observe and when to start timing.

Observer Training. Prior to actually entering the field and conducting observations, the observers were thoroughly briefed concerning the procedures to be followed. We spent a little over an hour and one-half

in classroom training. We discussed the observation schedule's structure, as well as the conceptualization of the variables and their operationalization. In particular, we discussed and developed various strategies to surmount any possible problems that might occur in the field. For example, the observers were cautioned not to display their observation sheets too prominently and to remain as unobtrusive as possible.

We expected that in most cases the cocktal lounges would be sufficiently occupied and dimly lit so that the observers blended in with the other patrons and, thus, did not appear noticable or overly obtrusive.

The observers, of course, found it desirable, if not necessary, to consume alcohol with their cohorts in order to best blend in with the environment's commercial function. As Sommer (1965) indicated, it is important for the observers to appear like ordinary customers and remain unobtrusive so as to avoid any undue attention from curious waiters or waitresses. Also, the observers were strongly encouraged to exercise caution against consuming too much alcohol so as not to place the reliability of their observations in jeopardy and cause instrument decay.

During the training sessions we discussed the purpose, scope, and objectives applicable in the operationalizing particular measures in the observation

schedule. This was accomplished, of course, without any discussion with the observers about the study's hypotheses. In short, we felt it best to train the observers to operationalize the various measures without any prior expectations of our predictions. Moreover, the chances that the observers might inadvertently or subconsiously self-fulfill the predicted hypotheses is greatly reduced if the observers remained unaware of the hypotheses.

After completing the training sessions, the observers were well-versed in completing their data collections.

Methodological Limitations and Strengths. For any given method to "work" it must, more than anything else, be able to achieve the various objectives of the particular method. We kept this in mind when we designed our sampling procedures.

Cutler and Storm (1975) and Plant et al. (1977) conducted observational studies of alcohol consumption in natural settings. They report direct observation as a reliable sampling method that met their objectives.

In our observations, the most fundamental objective of the sampling method was to accurately and reliably measure the social interaction of heterosexual

couples in cocktail lounges. In designing and conducting our observations, we became aware of a variety of limitations and strengths inherent to this type of sampling method.

For example, as we previously mentioned, a major limitation of our observations is that we knew nothing of the subject's behavior prior to the observations or afterwards. That is, a couple may have been very intimate prior to our observations; however, during our observations they may not have been intimate at all. Conversely, a couple may have been recorded as very intimate during our observations but something might have occurred later to cause the couple to become hostile with one another. As a result, such behavior would not be included in our sample. Clearly, our observations are limited to only that behavior which took place during the actual observation period.

Pragmatically, the strength of the time sampling method appeared superior to continuous measurements. Indeed, if the observers remained unobtrusive and did not stare at the subjects, then, conversely, the subjects would not stare back in return. That is, there is nothing unusual or extraordinary if someone in a cocktail lounge looks in your direction, or for that matter, right at you, once every five minutes. On the other hand in the case of continuous sampling, subjects

would be wary and would undoubtedly alter their behavior if they noticed the observers constant monitoring.

RESULTS

Interrater Reliability. Reliability correlations of the observational data were calculated for all of the variables.

The observers agreed well on the coding of the measures of intimacy. The observers' codings of interpersonal distance for the total 30 minute observation period were highly correlated ($r = 0.95$, $p < .001$). Observer reliabilities for touching were also highly correlated ($r = 0.94$, $p < .001$). As was the case for observer agreement for talking ($r = 0.82$, $p < .001$).

Reliability scores for the males' age and females' age were $r = 0.79$ and $r = 0.81$ (p's $< .001$), respectively. While the observers had moderate success in reliably recording female attractiveness ($r = 0.60$, $p < .001$), there was greater disagreement when it came to the judging of male attractiveness ($r = 0.44$, $p < .001$). Observing the presence or absence of a wedding ring also had a relatively low correlation ($r = 0.40$, $p < .001$). Finally, observers showed greater agreement in assessing the amount of alcohol consumed by women ($r = 0.81$, $p < .001$) than men ($r = 0.50$, $p < .001$).

Zero Order Correlations

(1) Touching.

Table 1 shows the zero order correlations between each of the predictor variables and the total amount of touching that occurred over a 30 minute observation period. Three of the predictors -total drinking, female drinking, and male drinking- were significantly related. Contrary to our original prediction, however, each of these measures of alcohol consumption is negatively rather than positively related to touching. Thus, as both men and women increase the amount of alcohol consumed, physical intimacy, as measured by touching, actually declines.

Interpersonal distance was also significantly related to touching ($r = 0.49$, $p < .001$). As interpersonal distance increased, touching also increased. Touching and talking were not significantly correlated ($r = 0.02$, $p = 0.38$)

(2) Talking.

Three variables were significantly correlated with total talking. As the arithmetic difference in physical attractiveness increased, talking decreased ($r = -0.27$, $p < .01$). That is, as males exceed females in judged attractiveness in a couple, talking decreased. On the other hand, as females exceeded males in attractiveness,

Table 1 Zero Order Correlations Between Predictors and Measures of Intimacy.

	distance	talking	touching
male + female drinking	-0.076 p=.171	0.041 p=.303	-0.25 p=.001
marital status	0.185 p=.01	0.073 p=.177	0.02 p=.40
absolute (male - female attractiveness)	0.348 p=.001	-0.019 p=.434	0.20 p=.49
female age	0.089 p=.131	-0.048 p=.276	-0.002 p=.488
male - female attractiveness	-0.098 p=.203	-0.265 p=.011	0.046 p=.356
female drinking	-0.071 p=.186	-0.007 p=.466	-0.263 p=.001
male - female age	0.067 p=.287	0.139 p=.119	-0.024 p=.421
absolute (male - female drinking)	0.066 p=.202	0.125 p=.057	0.015 p=.428
male age	0.132 p=.058	0.015 p=.426	-0.02 p=.402
male attractiveness	-0.007 p=.466	-0.251 p=.001	-0.036 p=.328
female attractiveness	0.115 p=.073	-0.02 p=.401	-0.069 p=.194
male drinking	-0.062 p=.218	0.073 p=.18	-0.173 p=.014
absolute (male - female age)	0.096 p=.21	0.223 p=.03	-0.021 p=.431
male - female drinking	-0.001 p=.496	0.086 p=.139	0.059 p=.228

talking was more frequent. Interestingly, male attractiveness was negatively related to talking ($r = -0.25$, $p < .001$). More attractive males were associated with low rates of total talking. According to Table 1, female attractiveness, per se, was unrelated.

As the difference in age increased for a couple, talking also increased ($r = 0.22$, $p = 0.03$). Thus, couples that were similar in terms of age showed less talking than couples who were different.

Neither distance ($r = -0.09$, $p = 0.14$) nor touching ($r = 0.02$, $p = 0.38$) were significantly related to talking.

(3) Interpersonal Distance.

Both marital status ($r = 0.19$, $p = 0.01$) and the absolute difference in attractiveness ($r = 0.35$, $p = 0.001$) were significantly correlated with interpersonal distance. The greater the discrepancy in attractiveness between a couple, the farther apart they sat. Similarly, married couples sat farther apart than unmarried couples.

Regression Analyses

Regression analyses were carried out to determine the relative strengths of the various predictors of intimacy. For the regressions we established a criterion whereby a variable must have a minimal beta

weight of ±0.10 or greater to be considered as a significant predictor.

As mentioned earlier, touching was operationalized so that during an observation period, a value of "1" was assigned if anyone touched anyone else. A zero was assigned if no touching occurred; thus, by counting up the "1's" we get an index of the total volume of touching.

Interpersonal distance was indexed as the total of the distances recorded between the couple over the 30 minutes of observation.

Talking was indexed so that during an observation period, a value of "1" was assigned if anyone talked. A zero was assigned if no talking occurred. Again, as in touching, we counted the "1's" to get an index of the total volume of talking.

The major predictor variables entered into the regressions were: male and female alcohol consumption, marital status, absolute (male - female attractiveness), female's age, arithmetic (male - female attractiveness), female alcohol consumption, arithmetic (male - female age), absolute (male - female alcohol consumption), male's age, male's attractiveness, female's attractiveness, male's alcohol consumption, absolute (male - female age), and arithmetic (male - female alcohol consumption).

In addition, interpersonal distance was incorporated as a possible predictor of talking and touching. Talking was also examined as a possible predictor of touching. Touching, in turn, was examined as a possible predictor of talking.

Regression Analysis For Touching.

Table 2 indicates that the strongest predictor of touching was interpersonal distance. By itself, this factor explained 24.04% of the variance. The positive sign of the beta value indicates that as the distance between members of a couple increased, the rate of touching also increased ($b^* = 0.18$, $p < .001$).

Female drinking was also significantly related to touching. This factor accounted for 5.53% of the variance. As the volume of alcohol consumed by the female increased, total touching decreased ($b^* = -0.36$, $p < .01$).

Beta weights for female attractiveness, talking, absolute difference in drinking, and male drinking equalled or exceeded the 0.10 criterion, though their high standard error made them statistically non-significant.

Female attractiveness was negatively related to

Table 2 Regression Analysis For Touching

	r	b	b*	F (1,154)	p
interpersonal distance	0.49	0.18	0.54	57.78	0.001
female drinking	-0.26	-1.11	-0.36	7.58	0.01
female attractiveness	-0.08	-0.53	-0.11	2.23	not significant
marital status	0.02	-0.80	-0.08	1.11	not significant
talking	0.04	0.11	0.10	1.94	not significant
abs. (male - female drinking)	0.04	-0.81	-0.18	2.00	not significant
male drinking	-0.19	0.45	0.16	1.08	not significant
absolute (male - female age)	-0.03	-0.24	-0.08	< 1	not significant
female age	0.00	-0.06	-0.03	< 1	not significant
male attractiveness	-0.04	-0.12	-0.03	< 1	not significant

touching ($b^* = -0.11$), suggesting that the rate of touching is lower when the female is rated as attractive rather than unattractive.

High rates of talking tended to be related to high rates of touching ($b^* = 0.10$).

The greater the difference in drinking between members of a couple, the lower the rate of touching ($b^* = -0.18$).

Finally, high rates of male drinking tended to increase the rate of touching ($b^* = 0.16$).

Regression Analysis For Talking.

Table 3 shows male attractiveness was the strongest predictor of talking, accounting for 4.5% of the variance. The negative sign of the beta weight ($b^* = -0.25$, $p < .01$) indicates that the attractive males were less likely to talk to their companion.

Marital status was also significantly related to talking ($b^* = 0.14$, $p < .01$). However, this factor only accounted for 1% of the variance. It appears that married couples were more likely to talk than unmarried couples.

The beta weights for interpersonal distance, absolute difference in drinking, arithmetic difference in drinking, and male's age reached the

Table 3 Regression Analysis For Talking

	r	b	b*	F (11,144)	p
male attractiveness	-0.21	-1.13	-0.25	8.16	0.01
marital status	0.09	0.93	0.14	2.42	0.01
female age	-0.23	0.16	0.08	< 1	not significant
distance	-0.08	-0.30	-0.10	1.30	not significant
female attractiveness	0.01	0.34	0.08	< 1	not significant
abs. (male - female attractive)	-0.01	-0.33	-0.07	< 1	not significant
abs. (male - female drinking)	0.10	0.42	0.14	< 1	not significant
male - female drinking	0.04	-0.28	-0.10	< 1	not significant
male age	-0.04	-0.36	-0.21	< 1	not significant
abs. (male - female age)	0.05	0.32	0.09	< 1	not significant
female drinking	-0.01	-0.25	-0.01	< 1	not significant

criterion of ± 0.10, but were not statistically significant.

The greater the interpersonal distance between a couple, the less talking ($b^* = -0.10$). The greater the absolute difference in drinking, ($b^* = 0.14$), the greater the talking. However, the more male drinking exceeded female drinking, the less conversation. Finally, the older the male, the less talking ($b^* = -0.21$).

Regression Analysis for Interpersonal Distance.

Table 4 shows that marital status ($b^* = 0.18$) and absolute difference in male and female attractiveness ($b^* = 0.17$) were significantly ($p's < 0.05$) related to interpersonal distance. Each variable accounted for more than 3% of the variance.

Interpersonal distance between couples was greater for married than unmarried couples.

Interpersonal distance between couples also increased as the absolute difference in male and female attractiveness increased.

Male drinking ($b^* = -0.12$), female attractiveness ($b^* = 0.14$), absolute difference in drinking ($b^* = 0.20$), and arithmetic difference in drinking ($b^* = -0.19$) all met our beta weight criterion. However, none of these variables were statistically

Table 4 Regression Analysis for Interpersonal Distance

	r	b	b*	F (1,154)	p
marital status	0.20	3.65	0.18	3.86	0.05
abs. (male - female attractive)	0.20	2.57	0.17	4.24	0.05
male drinking	-0.08	-0.99	-0.12	1.58	not significant
female attractiveness	0.10	1.96	0.14	1.67	not significant
abs. (male - female age)	0.15	0.57	0.05	< 1	not significant
male - female attractiveness	-0.08	1.08	0.09	< 1	not significant
abs. (male - female drinking)	0.04	1.90	0.20	1.74	not significant
male - female drinking	-0.04	-1.58	-0.19	1.31	not significant
male age	0.16	0.22	0.04	< 1	not significant

significant.

Interpersonal distance decreased the more the male drank.

Interpersonal distance was greater the more attractive the female.

The absolute difference in alcohol consumption increased interpersonal distance, whereas, interpersonal distance decreased when male drinking exceeded female drinking.

Summary of Results

Touching. Originally, our analysis of the zero order correlations found that all measures of alcohol consumption were negatively related to touching. A regression analysis showed that female drinking, in particular, accounted for this relationship. Contrary to popular belief, the more a woman consumes, the less touching occurs. The effects of alcohol consumption on acts of touching only by the male and touching by the female were examined in addition to total touching. In both of these cases, female drinking had a significantly negative effect. The regressions, however, show that male alcohol consumption tends to increase touching. While the beta weights were not statistically significant, they were consistently

positive. Thus, controlling for the effects of female drinking, male drinking appears to facilitate touching.

As one might expect, interpersonal distance had a powerful effect on touching. Couples who sat far apart touched more. This is due to the fact that by virtue of sitting apart, they were forced to touch one another to ensure communication.

Talking. The regression analysis revealed that male attractiveness was the strongest predictor of talking, i.e., attractive males were associated with dyads with low rates of conversation. Originally, the analysis of zero order correlations found that attractiveness differences was also important. In the regression, this effect is reduced and dominated by male attractiveness.

Age similarity no longer is significantly related to talking in the regression analysis. However, marital status is a marginally significant predictor, with married subjects showing higher rates of conversation.

Interpersonal Distance. Our findings for the regression analysis were identical to those for the zero order correlational analysis. Differences in attrac-

tiveness tended to increase interpersonal distance. Similarily, married couples tended to sit farther apart.

DISCUSSION

This study demonstrated that a variety of social factors are predictive of public intimacy in cocktail lounges. In particular, our results indicate that married couples sat farther apart than unmarried couples. This result supports our hypothesis predicting married couples to be less intimate in public.

Hare and Bales (1963) found that in a social session, generally, people talk more to the person seated beside them for a more "intimate conversation" than those seated across the table.

In our study we found that married couples generally tended to sit across from one another while unmarried couples tended to sit side-by-side, and closer together. That is, in this study, data were collected, however, not analyzed, indicate that 54% of the married couples sat across the table from one another while 38% of the unmarried couples sat across from one another. Additionally, we found that 29% of the married couples and 42% of the unmarried couples sat side-by-side. Thus, we find that married couples

talk more but sit farther apart.

There are a variety of possible explanations why married couples are less intimate in public. For example, unmarried couples may still enjoy the novelty of each other's presence. Married couples may, because of over-familiarity, be satiated with one another. Unmarried couples may have no other time together in which to be intimate except in the cocktail lounge setting (cf. Cloyd, 1977). Married couples, on the other hand, have easier access to private places in which to be intimate.

Another possibility is that married couples are normally older and less attractive. Previous research (e.g., Harrell, 1979) indicates that both these traits may reduce intimacy. A possible explanation for this may reside with the speculation that our culture probably provides norms which dictate that young unmarried or the newly wed "honeymooners" are expected to engage in intimate behavior. It may be that our culture transmits these norms which indicate the appropriateness of public intimacy. Few people would find it odd, or take a second glance at young lovers engaged in public intimacy. Older married couples, on the other hand, could expect to be the subject of quizzical stares. The literature on physical attractiveness (e.g., Walster and Berscheid, 1974) suggests

that, as a culturally determined appropriate target group eligible to engage in intimacy, it may be that public intimacy appears as inappropriate public behavior for older married couples.

In the present study, marital status remained a statistically significant predictor even when other variables like age and attractiveness were entered into the regression analysis and their impact, subsequently, controlled for. Because of the suspect nature in which marital status was measured, i.e., by simply observing whether or not a wedding ring was worn, those couples categorized as "married" might, in actual fact, be married couples who are conventional enough to wear a wedding ring. Their conventionality may include very modest and non-intimate behavior in public places.

The second significant predictor of interpersnal distance was the absolute difference in male and female attractiveness. As this difference increased, interpersonal distance also increased. This may simply be another instance of the frequently observed tendency for similar individuals to affiliate more and to feel more at ease with each other (Walster et al., 1966; Berscheid et al., 1971). However, we must point out that in this study the age difference variable did not predict intimacy, only

similarity in attractiveness did. Thus, in this study, individuals similar in attractiveness, not age, were more intimate in public. This matching hypothesis in physical attractiveness has been confirmed for married (Murstein and Christy, 1976) and unmarried couples (Silverman, 1971).

We found two significant predictors of touching in the regression analysis. The first was interpersonal distance. Our results indicate that the interpersonal distance between the members of a couple increased the total amount of touching. That is, the greater the distance between the couple, the rate of touching increased. The corollary to this may be that the impetus to touch is reduced by close interpersonal distances. Again, as we mentioned in the results section, it may quite simply be that due to the fact that close proximity mitigates the need to touch the couples who are sitting apart may be forced to touch one another more in order to ensure and maintain communication.

The second significant predictor of touching was female alcohol consumption. Surprisingly, we found that female drinking was negatively related to the total amount of touching. We began this research firmly believing that alcohol consumption would increase acts of public intimacy. Moreover,

we had hypothesized that as alcohol consumption increased, the rate of total touching would increase. Our results, however, clearly indicate that touching decreases as female alcohol consumption increases. This finding is difficult to explain. Nevertheless, it may be, in a tenuous way, that women who drink alot are more on guard because of their vulnerability and, consequently, reject touching.

We found two significant predictors of talking in the regression analysis. The strongest predictor was male physical attractiveness. The results show that attractive males talk less to their companion. Again, this result indicates and confirms our hypothesis that similarity in attractiveness is requisite to a great deal of social interaction. Previous research (e.g., Berscheid and Walster, 1974) suggests that very attractive males may be dissatisfied with their partners. They may not feel it is worth their while to invest much time in cultivating a relationship they are not interested in. Moreover, Murstein and Christy (1976) have pointed out that not only are men more concerned with physical attractiveness than women but those husbands whose perception of their wife's physical attractiveness as high also score high on a marital adjustment scale.

The other significant predictor of talking was marital status. We found that married couples talk more than unmarried couples. This result is completely contrary to what we had expected. We predicted that unmarried couples would talk much more than married couples (cf. Rosenblatt, 1974). However, a possible explanation of this finding may be that older, married couples are more at ease with one another because of familiarity. This familiarity may enhance conversation. Young, unmarried couples, on the other hand, may speak less because they are not as familiar with each other and, consequently, more hesitant to engage in polemic discourse. In other words, it may be that by speaking less it is easier to present yourself in the best light possible without provoking the other person. Moreover, it may be that married couples, by virtue of being married, have already passed through a sort of verbal courtship process and have matched, selected, and developed areas and stances for conversation.

Future research to examine social factors and social interaction that occur in cocktail lounges, in particular, public intimacy, would find it useful to explore other areas of nonverbal communications other than touching and interpersonal distance. For example, further studies should address gestures,

length of eye contact, postures, laughing, and other mannerisms that indicate nonverbal communications. Further studies along these lines will help to generalize and describe an important aspect of human behavior: heterosexual public intimacy.

Finally, in addition to describing an interesting social phenomenon in and of itself, this thesis may also provide a methodological direction for measuring public social interaction. This type of research may prove valuable to future studies concerned with unobtrusive measures of public behavior.

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APPENDIX

Field Observations
Observation Schedule

Observer's i.d. _____ Observation No. ____

Partner's i.d. _____ Date _____

Time (24 hour) _____

Subject's Age: (1) Less than 20; (2) 20-24; (3) 25-29;
(4) 30-34; (5) 35-39; (6) 40-44;
(7) 45-49; (8) 50 or more.

Male's age _____ Female's age _____

Attractiveness: (1) Very unattractive; (2) unattractive;
(3) attractive; (4) very attractive

Male's attractiveness ____ Female's attractiveness ___

Touching: (1) Male touches female only; (2) female touches male only; (3) both touch; (4) neither touch.

___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Talking: (1) Male talks more than female; (2) female talks more than male; (3) both talk equally;
(4) neither talk.

___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Interpersonal distance: (1) 1" or less; (2) 2-6";
(3) 7-12"; (4) 13-18";
(5) 19-24"; (6) 25-36";
(7) more than 36".

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

Male's number of drinks per observation period

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

Female's number of drinks per observation period

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

Who pays? (1) Male pays all; (2) female pays all;
(3) both pay equally; (4) couldn't determine
who paid.

_____

Marital status: (1) Couple is married; (2) couple is not
married; (3) uncertain about marital
status.

_____